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ABSTRACT

The problems that middle school special education students experience in the academic area of social studies were addressed in this practicum. The students could not grasp the ideas, received poor grades, and exhibited a very poor attitude about the relevance of social studies as an academic concern. The special education social studies classes were composed of sixth through eighth graders in a rural middle school. All students were involved in a full-time special education program. The students studied world history during the 20th century. The objectives of this practicum included raising grades, increasing the retention of knowledge, and improving student attitudes. The implementation project involved the use of various multisensory strategies such as cooperative learning, study guides, advance organizers, visual displays, films, speakers, and student notebooks. Two of the three objectives were attained with a much higher retention of knowledge and an improved interest in the area of social studies. The third objective showed a slight improvement in grades with a much lower failure rate. Appendices include sample study guides, advance organizers, cooperative learning projects, and film listings. (Author)

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INCREASING THE SOCIAL STUDIES PERFORMANCE OF MIDDLE SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS USING MULTISENSORY STRATEGIES

by

Judith L. Erven

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education at Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

August, 1991

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Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed Judith L. Erven

ABSTRACT

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

Teaching social studies in the special education classroom is an area that is in need of much research, growth, and development. The problems faced by the teacher in attempting to motivate and stimulate her students provide a variety of challenges. This practicum was an attempt to explore the possibilities for the special education teacher that would make the academic area of social studies a rewarding learning experience for her students.

Background

The setting for this practicum was a rural middle school with a population of approximately 450 students in grades six, seven, and eight. The school faculty of 30 teachers included three full-time special education teachers who shared the responsibilities of teaching approximately 60 special education students. The location of the school was rural, and the majority of the students came from families in the low socio-economic range of income.

The Exceptional Student Education Department combined learning diaabled, emotionally handicapped, and educable

mentally handicapped students; all classes were labeled as having a varying exceptionalities composition. Parental involvement in the special education program was limited, and contact usually occurred only when initiated by the teacher or other school personnel.

For purposes of this practicum, the area of social studies within the special education curriculum was considered. The social studies program rotated on a three-year plan with one year devoted to the study of United States history, the second year world history, and the third year world geography. The rationale for this rotation was that students would be given the same curriculum as the regular education classes; however, the same special education teacher was responsible for teaching all three years of the program.

The social studies classes were a combination of students from grades six, seven, and eight because students were ability-grouped rather than by grade. The writer of this practicum was the only special education teacher who had the responsibility of teaching social studies. The writer's two classes were composed of 17 students; seven students during one class period, and ten students during the second class period. The majority of the 17 students was male with only three female students. Because of the varying exceptionalities composition, the classifications

of the students included nine specific learning disabilities students, four emotionally handicapped students, and four educable mentally handicapped students. The classes were divided by nationality with eight white students, seven black students, and two Spanish-American students. Less than half the students lived with their natural parents, and four students resided with a relative other than a parent.

Problem Statement

The 17 students in the social studies classes participated in the special education program on a full-time basis. They were required to take social studies as a part of their daily schedule. There was no state mandated text for special education social studies classes; the special education department used the same textbook as the other social studies departments within the school. However, the teacher often had to search for materials that would parallel the required curriculum, yet could be adapted to the level of the special education student.

Many special education teachers have repeatedly expressed the frustrations they have found in attempting to teach a social studies course with understanding and retention to special education students (Marieh, 1991; Cradick, 1991). Parents also saw a cause for concern in

this area because the subject was difficult and uninteresting to their special education child (Busch, 1991; Soloranzo, 1991). But the greatest frustration was experienced by the student who found this subject area boring, beyond most comprehension, and of little or no relevance to his life.

A teacher-made test of general knowledge covered in this year's world history curriculum was given to both the special education social studies classes (17 students) and a regular sixth grade social studies class (16 students). Table I shows the results of this comparison test. The twenty questions included in the test were given orally and required a short paper and pencil response (Appendix A:47). Because both classes used the same textbook and covered the same material this year, the questions were relevant to both groups.

Table I

Test of Social Studies
World History Knowledge

	Mean Score
Regular 6th grade	8.6
Special education	4.0

The difficulties that special education students experience with understanding and retention of social studies content was thus documented by a group mean score that was more than four points below the mean score of regular sixth graders.

The 17 students enrolled in the special education social studies classes also had all other subject areas taught by the same special education department. But a comparison of the grades in other subject areas showed a serious discrepancy among the grades received in other academic subjects and the grades received in the area of social studies. Table II is a listing of all grades of the 17 students in their major academic areas of study.

Table II

Grades Received, First Semester (1990-91)
Special Education Students

Grades	A	B	C	D	F
Language Arts	1	5	5	4	2
Mathematics	1	4	6	5	1
Reading	3	4	6	3	1
Social Studies	0	2	4	3	8

Table II clearly showed the extent to which the social studies students were failing to grasp the content area

being presented to them. Only two students achieved a grade above the C level, and students were four times more likely to fail this subject than any of their other academic subject areas.

Because the special education students found the study of social studies uninteresting and of little relevance to their lives, they also placed this subject last in a preference ranking of all their academic subjects. The 17 special education students were given a questionnaire asking them to list in order of preference from one to five their most favorite subject to their least favorite subject (Appendix B:50). As shown in Table III, social studies ranked lowest in a comparison of the mean preference scores of the five major academic subjects.

Table III

Preference Ranking of Academic Subjects
Special Education Students

	Mean Score
1st place: Science	2.65
2nd place: Language Arts	2.76
3rd place: Mathematics	2.82
4th place: Reading	3.18
5th place: Social Studies	3.59

According to Patton, Polloway, and Cronin (1987) there were several reasons for the existence of a serious problem in special education social studies classrooms:

*There is a limited amount of information which can be found on how to teach this subject to special students.

*It is difficult to find consensus regarding recommended content and instructional methodology.

*Special educators are often not prepared to teach social studies.

*Handicapped students lack the requisite academic, study, and library skills, and may have a limited understanding of essential social studies concepts.

*The emphasis on the development of basic skills is an all-consuming effort in many programs and social studies has been given a low status.

Many of these reasons given by Patton, Polloway, and Cronin were most applicable to the practicum setting. The lack of information on how to teach social studies to special education students, and the skills of the students necessary to grasp such concepts had been observed as problems in the writer's setting. Also the low status given to social studies as an academic subject area, and the training of the teacher to effectively teach this

academic subject added to the problem.

However, one of the primary reasons for a problem in this writer's special education social studies class was the overall reading levels of the students. The textbook then being used was the same textbook used in the regular sixth grade world history classes; the average reading level of the special education full-time student was third grade or below (current Individual Education Plan, IEP's). To expect the student to be able to read the words of the text was a demanding and frustrating task, and comprehension without readability was nonexistent.

The 17 students in the special education social studies classes had many difficulties coping with this subject area. These difficulties were evident in the retention of previously taught material, grades received, and a dislike of the subject area. Causes of these problems included the lack of successful strategies for teaching social studies in a special education setting, and a lack of materials relative to the special education students' ability level. The students' defiency of basic skills necessary to comprehend the material, and the absence of training in this area for the special education teacher was also a cause for problems. Because social studies was not regarded as an important academic concern

in a special education curriculum, addressing these problems had not received the attention necessary for successful solutions.

This practicum was an attempt to create a social studies classroom in which the students would be more excited about the material being presented to them, would retain more knowledge about their world both past and present, and would bring their social studies grades up to a level that equaled their other special education academic class grades.

Outcome Objectives

Students in special education needed improvement in many areas of the basic skills necessary to succeed in a school program. Because so many demands were placed on the student and the teacher, the area of social studies was often neglected or taught at the most minimal level. But special education should not overlook the knowledge, skills, and concepts taught in a social studies curriculum. An appreciation of the student's own environment and of the world in which he lives may give him a better understanding of his role in the future of his own community.

This practicum attempted to accomplish the following objectives in the special education social studies

classroom:

1. Over a period of ten weeks, the students in the special education social studies classes will narrow the discrepancy by two points in test scores between their classes and the regular sixth grade world history class. This will be shown by a post test of general knowledge of the twentieth century world history being studied during this 10 week period of time.
2. Over a period of 10 weeks, the students in the special education social studies classes will demonstrate a more positive attitude and interest in the subject matter being presented. This attitude will be indicated by a pre-program and a post-program preference ranking, done by each student, which will include all academic areas of study. The attitude change will be shown by a .50 mean score improvement in the post-program preference ranking over the pre-program ranking.
3. Over a period of 10 weeks, 12 out of 17 of the students in the special education social studies classes will receive a grade of C or better. Grades will be determined by averaging the 10 weekly quizzes and then using the school grading scale. The weekly quizzes will cover material presented that week in

the study of twentieth century world history.

An evaluation of objective attainment was to be made at the conclusion of the 10 week implementation of the practicum. Weekly quiz scores were to be averaged and grades assigned, post-implementation preference rankings were to be collected, and the post test to be given. Personal observations by teachers, parents, and students were also to be recorded.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

The question of how to teach the academic area of social studies to a group of students with low reading ability, deficient memory processing, very little abstract thinking power, a poor concept of time and dimension, no organizational skills, and below level writing and spelling capabilities had long been the predicament of the special education teacher. Often these special education children came from homes where there were no newspapers, magazines, or books; where the parents had no political affiliation and were not even registered voters, and where the total focus of the home was survival with little interest in the outside world. Together the child's environment and his lack of academic skills made the task of teaching social studies seem most formidable.

Yet the importance of the values gained in a social studies class could not be overlooked. The future of our country depends on all our citizens, handicapped and non-handicapped, being aware of the background of our country's beliefs, a familiarity with the surroundings in which we live, and the values by which we intend to live our adult lives. Simms (1984) suggested that mildly

handicapped students have a propensity toward juvenile deliquency, and that if social studies could help these students understand our laws, it might curb their tendencies toward conflicts with the American system.

Despite this serious need, Patton, Polloway, and Cronin (1987) agreed with many other educators that when all available literature was reviewed, very limited information was available about the current status of social studies in the field of special education. In a survey conducted by Donahue and Zigmond in 1986, and reported by Maheady, Sacca, and Harper (1988), almost 80 percent of all ninth grade learning disabled students received grades of D or below in social studies. A survey of 284 individuals teaching in the field of special education conducted in 1987 by Patton, Polloway, and Cronin indicated that more than one-third of all teachers of special education social studies use the same curriculum as in regular education. Clearly there was a serious need for the development of new methods of instruction in the social studies area of special education.

One of the most promising methods being used in some social studies programs today seemed to be cooperative learning. Ross quoted Leming as saying "Cooperative

learning appears to be a promising method for instruction in social studies because it can simultaneously achieve academic and socio-moral goals." (1989:21) In a cooperative learning group as set up by the classroom teacher, all students were dependent upon one another to accomplish their assigned tasks. The success of the group depended on the strengths and abilities of the entire group and their willingness to cooperate with one another (Margolis, McCabe, and Schwartz, 1990).

A basic premise of cooperative learning was that students could learn a great deal from another student. When forced to work together on a project in which the success of the group depended on the willingness of each of its members to participate, very special peer interactions might result. "Friendships begun during cooperative learning may generalize throughout the day making school more attractive to educationally handicapped students." (Margolis, McCabe, and Schwartz, 1990:111). 122 studies reviewed by Johnson and Johnson in 1986, and reported by Margolis, McCabe, and Schwartz (1990) stated that cooperative learning produced higher achievement, greater retention, and more positive attitudes toward subject areas.

The responsibility of the teacher in a cooperative learning program was to design the instruction and topics

to fit the abilities of the students, explain the assignments in a clear, step-by-step manner, and make the students aware of how they would be evaluated. Then the teacher became a facilitator of learning, rather than a director of learning (Peters, 1989). Cooperative learning programs help expand one of the primary goals of a social studies program, that of developing responsibility within the student.

A second method being presented to aid in the retention of content area material was the use of visual displays. Darch and Carnine (1986) stated their belief that learning disabled students were very deficient in their ability to recognize and recall factual information presented to them in a content area of instruction such as social studies. During a study conducted with 24 learning disabled students, Darch and Carnine attempted to discover whether these students could be taught a study strategy through the use of visual displays. The group was divided in half with 12 students in a visual display group, and 12 students in a text group. Visual displays were presented to students using an overhead projector with the teacher identifying and labeling all important parts of the display. The text group received the same content material covered only through use of the textbook and teacher instruction.

The results of this study showed that the visual display group outperformed the text group on each of the tests given covering the content material. Darch and Garnine concluded that visual displays form a very powerful method to increase the special education student's comprehension during instruction. They felt this success was achieved because the display allowed the teacher to control and point out the most important concepts in the instruction. It also provided a frame of reference for the student to place and retain information in a systematic scheme.

Along with the success of visual displays, the use of graphics in the social studies classroom was considered. As previously mentioned, the learning disabled student was lacking in the reading skills necessary to locate and identify the important points from a textbook. But Bergerud, Lovitt, and Horton (1988) found that students with poor reading skills performed much better on tests when diagrams and drawings were used to supplement the regular textbook readings. Teachers also acknowledged that graphics had an important impact on student performance in that the majority of students (55.3%) achieved their highest test scores during coverage of material using the graphics treatment (Bergerud, Lovitt, and

Horton, 1988). Graphics presentations hold the possibility for a more effective grasp and retention of materials in the area of social studies.

Another form of visual stimulation for the student was the use of films and videos. Because many learning disabled students had process disorders in either or both the areas of visual perception and visual-motor skills, it was often difficult to keep one's place when reading from the textbook. It was also an almost overwhelming task to copy information from a chalkboard, especially for those students for whom writing was in itself a slow and laborious task. For these reasons, Simms (1984) recommended that teachers supplement their lectures and textbook readings with as many films and filmstrips as were available on the topic under consideration. Many special education students received a great deal of their visual stimulation from the television set in their home, and watching a film or video was an accepted mode of learning for their lifestyle.

Inviting a guest speaker into the classroom could often make a topic come alive and seem more realistic (Marieh, 1991). When viewed through the eyes of a knowledgeable source, or someone with first-hand experience, the students might pay close attention and find new

interest in the topic. However, with special education students, the guest speaker needed to be aware of behavior problems within the classroom prior to the visit, and students needed to be reminded of proper classroom etiquette when having a guest speaker in their room.

When viewed in its most basic terms, the problem of social studies depended upon the students' comprehension of the subject matter. "Students' difficulties in comprehending subject matter in social studies classes are often diagnosed as reading problems." (Matorella, 1990:131). Right now it is estimated that over 23 million people in the United States are illiterate; many of these are found in our middle and secondary schools (Matorella, 1990). When reading was one of the primary learning disabilities found in the special education student, and most social studies information was taught through reading, was it any wonder we had such an academic stumbling block for special education?

Because of these reading and comprehension problems, Matorella (1990) recommended the use of an advance organizer. Matorella defined this as "Any devise that is used to provide a preview of material to be learned and that helps the learner organize, remember, and relate prior knowledge to new information to be learned."

(1990:133). The advance organizer might take the form of simple, step-by-step verbal instructions, charts, diagrams, and maps. The idea was that the teacher helped organize all the pertinent information at the introduction of a topic in a manner that would generate learning and aid in the retention of the subject matter.

Much had been written about the place of computers in the academic classroom of the future; its usefulness in the social studies curriculum could not be overlooked. The computer's greatest value was in its ability to allow the student to work at his own pace, to review or highlight important facts, to use charts, diagrams, and guides to direct the student's learning, and to provide interesting and challenging activities to otherwise tedious material. A study conducted by Horton et al (1989) revealed that the average score for the special education student using a computerized study program was 77 percent, in comparison with a 58 percent for those students using only a note-taking treatment without the use of computers. As new software programs are developed for all areas of social studies, the computer will become an invaluable tool in both the regular and the special education social studies classroom.

A weekly study guide prepared by the teacher and given to each student was another method of enhancing the

performance of the learning disabled student. The study guide was described as a set of "...questions or statements that appear on a worksheet as instructional aids to help students learn content information." (Horton and Lovitt, 1989:448). The teacher determined the important instructional objectives of each unit, the most comprehensive method of presenting these objectives in question or statement form, and the correct or appropriate responses to these questions (Maheady, Sacca, and Harper, 1988). The study guide provided a convenient and organized outline of the material the student had to comprehend in order to achieve success on weekly quizzes. In a research study conducted by Horton and Lovitt (1989) with learning disabled students in a social studies class, the students averaged a 68 percent correct response when using study guides, a 49 percent correct when relying only on self-study methods. The same success was shown with regular and remedial students, middle and secondary levels, and in social studies and science classes. The study guide usage was shown to increase textbook comprehension with no significant changes in the setting, grouping of students, or instructional practices usually employed by the teacher.

Two final techniques used with success in many academic areas have been the student notebook and the

student independent project. The notebook became the storage facility for all information, study guides, graphic data, and worksheets provided by the teacher (Learning Strategies Program, 1984). It created an organized collection of data for the student when working in his cooperative learning group, and a concrete packet of information in one place for review and evaluation in preparation for weekly quizzes. It also provided a feeling of pride in his own personal property for the student to take with him at the end of the social studies unit, and a feeling that he did learn the material and accomplish a great deal because of his efforts. The notebook had been used in other areas of the special education curriculum, especially in the Learning Strategies Program now being implemented in both language arts and reading programs.

The independent project was also commonly used by social studies teachers as a method of in-depth study of a particular area of the curriculum (Brown and Jones, 1991). However, with middle school students, much direction and guidance must be given if projects of quality and depth are expected. Resources must be provided to guide the research, and a great deal of motivation and challenge are necessary for the student to be willing to work outside

the classroom and follow through on the project. This was especially true of the special education student who had no inclination to complete projects that required extra time outside the classroom setting.

For purposes of this practicum implementation, the following seven strategies were to be used. All the multisensory methods suggested by these strategies were to be an attempt to reach each student in his best modality.

Cooperative Learning (Peters, 1989; Ross, 1989; Margolis, McCabe, and Schwartz, 1990).

The students were to learn the value of working together to solve a teacher-given activity. The group was to be set up by the teacher so that a mixture of abilities and personalities could be achieved. The activity would be explained, the evaluation procedures discussed, and the strategies necessary for success determined. The teacher was then to become the guide as the students discovered through their own efforts the solution to the activity. It was hoped that the cooperation necessary for the group's success would be transferred to other activities as well as other times during the student's day. This cooperative learning strategy was to be implemented a maximum of two periods per week.

Advance Organizer (Matorella. 1990).

At the introduction of each new unit of study, the

teacher was to present an overview of the content to be introduced. The overview would highlight the important concepts within the unit and relate it to any previous knowledge the student might have about the topic. It was to point out what information the student should focus his attention upon during the presentation of that particular unit.

Study Guides (Horton and Lovitt, 1989; Maheady, Sacca, and Harper, 1988).

In preparation for the material to be covered and the quiz to be given at the end of each week, the teacher was to present a study guide to each student at the beginning of the week. This would be in the form of questions or statements concerning all pertinent information to be covered during that week. The student was to be given time to answer the questions and receive feedback from the teacher. The study guide was to form the basis for review for the weekly quiz and was to become an important section in the student folder.

Visual Displays (Darch and Carnine, 1986).

The teacher was to attempt to provide the student as much visual information as could be found on the topic under consideration. This was to include photographs, charts, diagrams, graphs, and maps that could in any way

create a visual image to imprint upon the student's mind. The overhead projector, as well as the chalkboard, were to be utilized to visually present important words, and to create a diagram showing the connection between various concepts, historical facts, dates, or people. Visual displays were to be used on a regular daily basis.

Films (Simms, 1984).

Films and videos available from the county media service were to be shown whenever there was one such film covering the topic under consideration. The film had to be applicable to the students' ages and understanding. Films were to be the most concrete evidence of the past and its actual events to make it come alive for the students who had little ability to relate to the past history and its consequences to their lives.

Guest Speaker (Marieh, 1991)

It was hoped that because the material being covered dealt with twentieth century history, especially in regards to the American involvement in World War I and World War II, a veteran of our armed services would be available as a guest speaker. The veteran's association was to be approached and a speaker engaged who was aware of the setting of a special education classroom. Many of the students in this class will not have the opportunity for

education beyond the high school level, and may enlist in some branch of military service. First hand information about such service should be most informative.

Student Notebook (Learning Strategies Program, 1984).

The teacher was to provide each student with a notebook or folder in which the student would be expected to place all materials presented during this ten week study. It was hoped that the notebook would become a source of some pride to the student upon completion of the study.

The use of computers would have a great deal of value in any social studies curriculum planning (Horton et al, 1989), but this option was not available in the social studies classroom in this school at the time of implementation.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The focus of study for the special education social studies classes during the 10 week implementation period was twentieth century world history. Because the curriculum for world history followed a time line, the classwork had now reached this period of study. The students in the special education social studies classes were presented the curriculum through various multisensory strategies in an attempt to reach the students in a new way and encourage them to acquire an interest in the material presented.

The 10 week period followed a weekly topic schedule with each week covering a pertinent area of twentieth century world history. The topics commenced with the early 1900's and the conditions leading to the First World War, and continued through the most important events affecting world cultures and ethics through the 1991 Desert Storm conflict (Appendix C: 52).

The social studies class met every day of the week for a period of 43 minutes. Each week followed the same approximate lesson plans. At the beginning of the 10 week implementation period, the students were given a

weekly schedule that was to be followed as closely as possible during implementation (Appendix C:52). The students were then aware of the general plans for each day and felt prepared and more comfortable with the introduction of new topics each week. Students missimg a day of school were aware of the plans for that day and could discuss the lesson with either the teacher or another student. It was found that when unforeseen circumstances forced a change in the announced schedule, e.g. assemblies, rescheduled speakers, unavailable films, or schoolwide testing, the students were not as comfortable with the daily class.

Each week's plans included;

Monday: Introduced topic for the week through teacher presentation of advance organizer and lectures, passed out weekly study guide (Appendix D:54); discussed important facts and terms.

Tuesday: Films, filmstrips, and videos shown (Appendix E:56). Reviewed important film points; finished discussion of weekly topic and worked with study guide.

Wednesday: Cooperative learning project (Appendix F:59). Maps, games, worksheets. Speakers when appropriate (Appendix G:63).

Thursday: Cooperative learning project and presentations. Reviewed weekly topic for quiz.

Friday: Weekly quiz. Completion of any unfinished work.

The following eight strategies were chosen from available research for implementation of this special education practicum. Each strategy was selected for its ability to reach the individual student through a variety of multisensory approaches. An attempt was made to vary teaching each day to allow for visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning.

With the introduction of the implementation, each student was provided a student notebook with his name on the front. This notebook had side pockets in which the student could place all relevant material presented during the 10 week implementation. The notebooks were kept in the classroom except when taken home for study purposes the night before the weekly quiz. Students were very possessive of their own notebook and looked forward to receiving it at the beginning of each social studies class. The teacher marked the weekly grades on the inside of the folder and students were very pleased to see a weekly summary of their progress over the 10 week period. When implementation was completed, the students were given the notebook to take home as a record of the amount of their work and learning during this unit of study.

At the introduction of each new week's topic, an advance organizer (Appendix H:65) was presented to the

students. The teacher had prepared a transparency for the overhead projector prior to class time, and allowed the advance organizer to remain in front of the students during class time. The advance organizer contained important facts and terms being used during the topic period. The students were able to follow class discussions without teacher reference to the advance organizer, and it allowed the students to copy important facts and terms with little explanation.

Also at the introduction of each weekly topic, the teacher had prepared a study guide (Appendix D:54) with pertinent questions relating to the week's discussion. Each student received the study guide and placed it in his student notebook. It was found that questions on the study guide needed to be arranged in the same manner as presentation of the facts. But too often students became more concerned about writing out answers to the study guide rather than participating in the class discussion. The teacher often found it necessary to write the answers to the study guide questions on the board, as many of the names, places, and terms were too difficult for special education students to spell correctly. The study guide did become a valuable tool for the student in preparation for the weekly quiz given on Friday.

Visual displays were used as often as possible to recreate actual events and stimulate thinking. Pictures from World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War were displayed around the room when appropriate. Much use was made of maps and map labeling to visualize the changing world, and the use of visual time lines written on the board worked well in aiding the students to see events in the order of occurrence. Actual souvenirs of World War II added much to discussions. Any use of maps, puzzles, and wordsearches were successful and aided the student in his understanding of the weekly topic.

The use of cooperative learning projects (Appendix F:59) provided the most enjoyment for the student and was the most popular strategy employed by the teacher. However, students worked better with one partner rather than in groups of three or four students, this technique worked better with the smaller class size. The cooperative learning projects took a much longer period of time than scheduled, and the teacher generally had too much of a project planned for the allotted time. A variety of projects were attempted; students were more inclined to actively participate when each student was required to hand in some example of personal involvement rather than a collaborative effort. And certain students refused to

work in a group that involved them with students whom they did not like, even the idea of failure would not force cooperation among some students. Cooperative learning is an idea that has much potential for the social studies classroom and should become an integral part of the lesson plans from the beginning of the school year; each teacher can adjust the group size, members, and projects to meet her class situation.

The use of films (Appendix E:56) was the most disappointing of the strategies employed during this practicum. The teacher felt that actual footage of events since the 1900's would make such events come alive and more realistic to the students; films and videos were readily available for all important topics introduced during this period. However, most films presented information much too rapidly for special education students. The black-and-white films of this period were most unpopular, perhaps due to the overwhelming influence of color television and motion pictures. Also when the announcer or any other voices on the films were not American, the accented voices were difficult for special education students to follow. The use of a film with a projector allowed the display to be large enough for the entire class; films were often old, however, and of poor quality. Videos were in much better condition, but presenting the video on a small, 19 inch television

screen mounted high in the corner of the classroom did not keep the attention of the entire class. It is the teacher's general conclusion that most available films and videos of twentieth century history move too quickly and are too mature for the middle school special education student.

Guest speakers (Appendix G:63) were a very successful part of this practicum and showed a definite need for more cooperation between the general public and the classroom students. The speakers were able to express personal feelings about their involvement in the war, and were very dynamic in their descriptions. The speakers were most willing to answer any questions, and the students showed remarkable interest and good behavior during the speakers' presentations. It would be a wonderful asset to any classroom teaching to be able to draw on the vast amount of knowledge and experience available in family, friends, and community members who have a desire to share with students who may never have any other opportunity for such exposure.

Each Friday the students were given a quiz (Appendix I: 67) over material covered during that week's topic period. Though most questions required short answers, the use of true/false, multiple choice, matching, and short essay questions were also used. It was found that if the question were not explicitly stated on the study guide, a majority of the students could not recall the answer from

a general class discussion. Also many of the students could not read the quiz questions, and as many as one half the class members did not finish in the allotted class time. Because this practicum was completed during the last 10 weeks of the school year, many of the students were slowing down in their interest in their academic work; perhaps the use of a quiz every week became a tedious and boring task for the student. Quiz grades were not as high as the teacher considered appropriate.

The teacher was generally pleased with the strategies attempted during this 10 week implementation. The students were receptive to all methods and seemed to grasp the material and understand the basic events occurring in this period of history. The other social studies teachers in the school were most willing to contribute materials and visual displays to the weekly topic discussions. The county coordinator for the social studies curriculum provided many books and maps on the topic of twentieth century world history. Guest speakers made a great contribution to this practicum, and the head of the special education department at the school made many relevant suggestions during her observation periods. Both the school media center and the local university library were found to have a large quantity of printed material which could be adapted for use in the special education classroom.

The major problem during implementation was that too much material was prepared for presentation during class-time; the teacher was not able to use all prepared projects or review the material as often as she would have liked. The twentieth century period of history is so important in the social studies curriculum and requires more than a 10 week period for total coverage of the material. It is hoped that the students became interested enough in this important area of study that they will continue to be challenged to further explore world history in their high school curriculum.

CHAPTER IV

Results

This practicum was undertaken to increase the performance of the middle school students enrolled in special education social studies classes. The practicum had three main objectives: to narrow the discrepancy between the special education classes and the regular social studies classes in the amount of knowledge retained; to improve the students' attitude and interest in social studies; and to increase the students' grades.

Both the sixth grade social studies classes and the special education classes had spent the year studying the world history curriculum. Both classes used the same textbook, The World, and the special education teacher followed the same units of study as taught in the regular classroom. Before implementation of the practicum, the special education teacher prepared a test of general knowledge (Appendix A:47) and administered the test to the special education social studies classes and the regular sixth grade social studies classes. The results of this comparison test showed a group mean score for the special education classes of more than four points below the mean score of the regular sixth graders (Table I:4).

At the conclusion of the 10 week implementation period, the special education teacher again prepared a test covering the material presented during this period of study (Appendix J:69). The test was administered to the same regular sixth grade students and the special education students taking the world history curriculum. Table IV shows the results of this second comparison test.

Table IV

Test of Social Studies
World History Knowledge - Part II

	Mean Score
Regular 6th grade	7.8
Special education	11.0

The first objective of this practicum stated that over the 10 week period, the students in the special education social studies classes would narrow the discrepancy by two points in test scores between their classes and the regular sixth grade world history class. This objective was successfully attained in that the discrepancy was not only narrowed, but the special education classes actually achieved a more than three point higher

score than the regular sixth grade class. It must be taken into consideration that the test was prepared by the special education teacher who had control over both the material taught to her students and the test questions.

The second objective stated that the special education students would demonstrate a more positive attitude and interest in the social studies subject matter being presented. A pre-program preference placed social studies last in a ranking of all the students' academic subjects (Table III:6). The second objective stated that the attitude change would be shown by a .50 mean score improvement in the post-program preference ranking over the pre-program ranking. The post-program ranking was administered by one of the writer's colleagues; Table V shows the results of this ranking.

Table V

Preference Ranking of Academic Subjects
Special Education Students

	Mean Score
1st place: Mathematics	2.50
2nd place: Social Studies	2.69
3rd place: Science	3.00
4th place: Reading	3.31
5th place: Language Arts	3.50

The academic area of social studies not only gained a .90 mean score improvement over its pre-program ranking, but also moved from fifth place (last) in the ranking list to second place at the conclusion of implementation. It is hoped that this improvement reflects a more positive attitude and interest in the area of social studies for the special education student.

The final objective stated that over the 10 week period, 12 out of 17 students in the special education social studies classes would receive a grade of C or better. Grades for this period were determined by averaging the 10 weekly quiz grades and determining the final grade according to the school grading scale. Table VI shows the final grades received by special education students at the conclusion of implementation.

Table VI

Grades Received, Final Grading Period (1990-91)
Special Education Students

Grades	A	B	C	D	F
Language Arts	2	9	2	4	0
Mathematics	3	7	4	2	1
Reading	1	9	3	4	0
Social Studies	1	2	5	6	3

Although the final grades did show an improvement over the previous grading period, (Table II:5), the objective of 12 students receiving a grade of C or better was not attained; only eight of the 17 students received a grade of C or better. There was, however, a great improvement in the number of students receiving a failing grade; only three students received a failing grade of F as compared with eight students receiving an F during the previous grading period.

At the end of this 10 week practicum, the writer/teacher has concluded that the strategies employed were generally successful and the overall goals of the practicum were reached. Two out of three objectives were achieved, and the third objective showed much improvement. The students seemed to gain an interest and understanding in this period of twentieth century world history, and the teacher felt the students had learned a great deal of social studies and had enjoyed this special 10 week unit of study.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

The 17 students involved in this social studies practicum were initially placed in a special education program for a variety of reasons: they lacked reading and writing skills and had a general deficiency in academic skills; they were lacking in language development and understanding; they had serious emotional, social, or behavior problems; or perhaps they had an overall inability to survive in a regular education program. Special education is constantly searching for new methods of presenting academic material that will not only reach, but also teach the special student involved in such a program.

The area of social studies has been greatly neglected as an academic area in most special education programs. The current materials available to teach social studies in a high interest yet lower skill level leave the teacher feeling most inadequate as a facilitator of learning.

The multisensory strategies attempted in this practicum were almost the only choices presented in the current research materials available at this time. Many of the strategies were most worthwhile and will become

permanent teaching methods in the writer's teaching program. The use of the advance organizer and the study guide were two very effective methods of presenting and establishing retention of the material. The cooperative learning projects not only worked on academic and organizational skills, but also aided the development of social skills within the classroom. Guest speakers were accepted with great enthusiasm and their first-hand experiences added a new dimension to learning. The use of films and videos proved to be a disappointment, though the concept of the actual footage of important historical events is still a worthwhile concept. The quality of the films and the academic level at which they are produced needs to be readjusted to reach the middle school special education student.

The most serious problem facing the special education teacher today is a lack of time and finances to develop the programs necessary to reach special education students. Most special education teachers are responsible for several different academic areas of teaching; the writer of this practicum was also teaching several language arts and reading classes as well as the two social studies classes. Special education programs often require a great deal of legal paperwork outside the classroom, which leaves little

time for the adaptation of available materials to the special needs of her classroom. Although new methods are being developed which show great promise for working with special education students in the areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics, the academic areas of science and social studies seem to have been neglected. The quantity and quality of materials readily available for teaching either science or social studies in a special education setting is very disappointing.

Much has been written about the concept of mainstreaming special education students back into the regular education classroom, and this concept is very worthwhile. Yet there will always be those special students for whom mainstreaming remains an impossibility. If we continue to expect these students to take the academic area of social studies, there must be materials developed that will reach their special needs. Special education teachers must be given extra instruction on how to teach areas of learning that are outside their fields of expertise. And social studies must be given a higher priority as an area of academic learning in the school's special education program.

The strategies attempted during this practicum were presented to the Exceptional Student Education Department

at the writer's school, and will be available to the other teachers involved in the area of social studies. All advance organizers, study guides, cooperative learning projects, and other adaptive materials will be available to other special education teachers through the county Exceptional Student Education Office.

Should we teach social studies to special education students? Our world is constantly growing and changing; the most important function at our schools today is to prepare our students to survive and succeed as worthwhile adults in this changing world. An understanding of the different cultures, religions, and ethics which make up the world's population, as well as an understanding of the economics and the basic government principles by which a country establishes its laws, are important concepts for every citizen. We must not allow the special education student to be neglected as we prepare him to meet the challenges of the adult world.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

World History Knowledge Test

Pre-test

APPENDIX A

World History Knowledge Test

1. What is the most important resource in the Middle East?

2. What does the word "domesticate" mean?

3. People who wander around with no permanent home are called what?

4. What is a chariot?

5. What are hieroglyphics?

6. The world's longest river is what?

7. What civilization is responsible for constructing the Sphinx?

8. Name two of the major religions of the world:

9. The collection of stories about Greek and Roman gods and godesses are called what?

10. What does "Pax Romana" mean?

11. Name one thing the Roman Empire is remembered for:

12. Where did democracy first get its start?

13. Why did people in the Middle Ages go on crusades?

14. For how long a period do we elect the President of the United States?

15. What are the two parts of Congress?

16. Who was President of the United States before George Bush?

17. Who shot Abraham Lincoln?

APPENDIX A (continued)

18. What were the two sides in the Civil War?

19. What was the name of the ship on which the Pilgrim's first sailed to America?

20. What was the name of the war in which the United States fought for her independence from England?

APPENDIX B

Preference Ranking

APPENDIX B

Preference Ranking

Please mark which class you prefer, starting with a 1 for your favorite class, then 2, 3, 4, and 5 for your least favorite class:

_____ Language Arts

_____ Science

_____ Social Studies

_____ Reading

_____ Mathematics

APPENDIX C

Master Schedule

APPENDIX C

Master Schedule

Week Of:

April 1, 1991. Pre World War I, Conditions leading to war

April 8, 1991. World War I, League of Nations

April 15, 1991. 1920's and 1930's, Great Depression

April 22, 1991. Pre World War II, Rise of Nazism and Fascism

April 29, 1991. World War II, The War in Europe

May 6, 1991. World War II, The War in the Pacific

May 13, 1991. Post World War II, United Nations

May 20, 1991. 1950's, Korean War

May 27, 1991. 1960's, Vietnam War

June 3, 1991. 1970's, 1980's, 1990's, Desert Storm

APPENDIX D

Study Guide

APPENDIX D

Study Guide - Pre World War I

1. What is the difference between an imperialist country and an imperialist colony?

2. Why did European countries want colonies?

3. Who caused the feelings of nationalism in Italy and Germany?

4. What is nationalism?

5. What is imperialism?

6. What man was responsible for the military state of Germany in the 1860's?

7. What were some of the effects of the Industrial Revolution?

8. Name three good features of imperialism for the colonies:

9. Name three bad features of imperialism for the colonies:

10. What was the biggest factor about imperialism?

11. What does balance of power mean?

12. Name the countries of the Allied Powers:

13. Name the countries of the Central Powers:

APPENDIX E

Film Schedule

APPENDIX E

Film Schedule

Films to be shown on Tuesday of each week after introduction of material for the week.

April 2, 1991: Pre World War I

Background Tensions TV163201000
Importance of events between Sarajevo and the start of World War I 13 minutes (1983)

Outbreak of First World War VT001879000
Diplomatic maneuvers that led to World War I
29 minutes (1987)

April 9, 1991: World War I

World War I TV163200000
Great war's history from beginning to end
(1983)

Causes of World War I School Media Center filmstrip & record

April 16, 1991: 1920's and 1930's, Depression

Great Depression MP120973

Between the Wars: Great Depression VT001262000

April 23, 1991: Pre World War II

World War II: Roots of Aggression 1939-1949 VT001262000
Hitler gaining control of German government
14 minutes (1985)

Between the Wars: FDR and Hitler, Rise to Power VT001985

Between the Wars: FDR and Hitler, Dynamics of Power VT001986

April 30, 1991: World War II in Europe

Rise of Fascism and Second World War VT002197000
Covers WWI, WWII, dictatorships, Nazism, Holocaust
28 minutes (1989)

Der Fuhrer MP120943
United States enters World War II

APPENDIX E (continued)

May 7, 1991: World War II in the Pacific

War Comes to Pearl Harbor VT001995000
Causes of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor
26 minutes (1978)

Truman & the Atomic Bomb TV178619000
Decision to drop bomb and end WW II
18 minutes (1985)

May 14, 1991: Post World War II, United Nations

Focus on United Nations MP120914000
Birth and history of United Nations
14 minutes (1970)

U.N. is for You MP121925000
Purposes of the U.N. and how it affects life
14 minutes (1985)

May 21, 1991: 1950's, Korean War

Korean War TV158634000
War under MacArthur
9 minutes (1975)

Korean War: To Armistice 1951-1953 TV158635000
Effects of war and limited peace
6 minutes (1975)

May 28, 1991: 1960's, Vietnam War

Vietnam Perspective MP130705
Origins of U.S. involvement
32 minutes (1985)

June 4, 1991: 1970's, 1980's, 1990's, Desert Storm

Cold War and Europe and the Third World VT002198

Great Decisions 1990 VT002205

APPENDIX F

Cooperative Learning Project

APPENDIX F
Listing of Weekly Cooperative Learning Projects

April 1st: Pre-World War I
- Research on inventions with major consequences for the early 1900's.
- Map of Europe in pre-war 1914: label all countries.

April 8th: World War I
- Continue with map of Europe; color code Allied and Central Powers, mark major war fronts.
- Unscramble important terms from war.

April 15th: Post-World War I
- Divide into four groups, each group takes a country (Germany, Italy, United States, Russia). Answer questions about effects of depression on that country.

April 22nd: 1930's
- Puzzle wordsearch of 1930's (with partner) of important people, places, terms; answer question, then find answer in puzzle.
- Work on time line with important events since 1900's.

April 29th: World War II in Europe
- Dictionary search of important terms in World War II.
- Crossword puzzle of Europe.

May 6th: World War II in Japan
- Teacher reads story of middle school boy residing in Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945; students in groups write story of how they think their own experience would be in a nuclear war.
- Speakers from Pearl Harbor experience.

May 13th: United Nations
- Students in groups create a new country; answer questions about the country and what it should expect to get from the United Nations.
- Write thank-you notes to speakers from Pearl Harbor.

May 20th: Communism and Korean War
- Research on what life is like in a communist country; evaluation and comparison with democracy.

May 27th: Vietnam War
- Puzzle with communism vs. democracy; answer questions, fill in missing letters.
- Speaker on Vietnam War.

June 3rd: 1970's, 1980's, 1990's

Groups take list of six major problems facing world today (atomic bomb, hunger, overpopulation, energy, pollution, freedom/peace) - rank in order of seriousness. Choose one topic and expand on what caused problem and what must be done to correct it.

APPENDIX F

Cooperative Learning Project

Tuesday, April 2, 1991

Each student will choose a partner.
Each student will be given a map of Europe in 1914 (Pre World War 1).
Teacher will use overhead projector to help students label all the countries of Europe.
Student and partner will answer the following questions on Pre World War I map:

1. The Industrial Revolution began in Great Britain. What country is Great Britain Directly north From?

2. What two small countries bordering the North Sea were once controlled by France?

3. In what country was the state of Prussia located?

4. List the countries of the Central Powers.

5. List the countries of the Allied Powers.

6. List the countries that were neutral.

7. What is the one Allied country that is not shown on the map?

Wednesday, April 3, 1991

Teacher will divide class into four groups.
Each group will be assigned one of the following topics:

1. airplane
2. telegraph
3. electricity
4. automobile

Group will answer the following questions:

1. In what year did this invention first have an effect on the world?

2. In what ways did this invention change the world?

3. What man/group is given responsibility for this invention?

4. In what country was this invention first introduced?

Teacher will provide research material and be available to direct search for information.

APPENDIX G

Speaker Schedule

APPENDIX G

Speaker Schedule

Week of May 6, 1991:

World War II Veteran

Mr. Paul Bemis, President, Pearl Harbor Survivors

Week of May 27, 1991:

Vietnam Veteran

Mr. Harry Hopkins, Teacher, Practicum setting

APPENDIX H

Advance Organizer

APPENDIX H

Advance Organizer

Week of April 1, 1991

Industrial Revolution

machines
electricity
raw materials
weapons
agricultural improvements
transportation
communication

Imperialism

mother country
colonies
raw materials
new markets
cheap labor
Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy
4 good features
6 bad features
BIGGEST FACTOR

Germany

39 separate states
Prussia
Wilhelm I
Otto von Bismarck
2 main features of United Germany
strong nationalism
strong militarism

1910-1914

Allied Powers
Central Powers
alliances
balance of power
4 reasons for war

APPENDIX I

Weekly Quiz

NAME: _____

APPENDIX I
WORLD WAR II in EUROPE 68

Match the following:

1. Great Britain and France went to war against Germany after Hitler attacked _____
2. Thousands of British and French soldiers escaped from France in small _____
3. Winston Churchill said Great Britain would never _____
4. The British air force shot down 2,000 German _____
5. _____ was President of the United States
6. The United States sent _____ to help the Allies.
7. Pearl Harbor was an American naval base in _____

a. planes
b. Pacific Ocean
c. Franklin D. Roosevelt
d. boats
e. Poland
f. food and weapons
g. surrender

True or False:

8. Germany conquered Poland. _____
9. The German people were unhappy when Hitler became their leader. _____
10. Germany and Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. _____
11. The Germans lost the Battle of Britain. _____
12. Germany conquered Italy. _____
13. World War II began on September 3, 1938. _____
14. Mussolini and Hitler were not friends. _____

Short answers:

15. What was a blitzkreig?
16. Who was the American general who later became President?
17. What does genocide mean?
18. Why did Hitler think he had the right to murder Jews?
19. Russia's leader was:
20. What did Germany, Italy, and Japan plan to do?

APPENDIX J

World History Knowledge Test

Post-test

APPENDIX J

World History Knowledge Post-test

1. What does apartheid mean for Africa?

2. Name three raw materials:

3. What does overpopulation mean?

4. The idea of the League of Nations did not work; what similar organization was formed after World War II?

5. In the Treaty of Versailles, what country was forced to take the blame for World War I?

6. What one event in America is marked as the beginning of the Great Depression?

7. What are the conditions of a depression?

8. What is a dictatorship?

9. What was another name for the National Social German Worker's Party?

10. Who was the Fuhrer of Germany from 1933-1945?

11. What is a swastika?

12. Who was the only American President elected for more than two terms?

13. The Japanese attacked America on 12/7/41 at what place?

14. What did Hitler do with his enemies, especially the Jews?

15. What two countries lost in World War II?

16. Where does the United Nations meet today?

17. What country invaded Kuwait in August, 1990?

18. What American political family had two sons assassinated during the 1960's?

19. What is the meaning of the term "cold war"?

20. What American made the speech with the line "I have a dream..."?